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for
a Beautiful
America

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GUARD AGAINST PLANT PESTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Good Cause Deserves Careful Planning

Plant exchanges and gifts between different communities can be an important part of a beautification program. However, good planning and followthrough are necessary for success.

Even if exchange plants are healthy and pest free, they cannot be expected to flourish if they are not adapted to the climatic conditions or if they do not receive adequate care. Information on adaptability of plants to your community and how to grow them can be obtained from your State agricultural university or your county agricultural agent.

Long distance plant exchanges are even more risky than across-the-back-fence swapping of seeds or cuttings. Unless adequate precautions are taken, apparently healthy plants can carry hitchhiking pests and diseases that could cause great destruction to local plant life.

Federal and State plant quarantine regulations are designed to keep harmful plant pests from spreading into uninfested areas. By strictly complying with these regulations, you can avoid the danger of introducing pests that could change a dream of beauty into a nightmare of ruined gardens, blighted trees, and damaged crops. The virtual extermination of our chestnut trees by a foreign pest is a grim reminder of what could happen to other precious plant resources of the Nation.

Foreign Pests are a Continuing Threat

Many of our most destructive pests have come from foreign countries. In fact, alien pests frequently cause greater havoc here than they did in their native land, where their natural enemies held them in check.

Ornamental plants and trees intended to beautify our country have been the unintended means for bringing a number of destructive plant

pests and diseases to our shores. These unfortunate accidents occurred either before our plant quarantine system was established or were due to lack of knowledge of plant pests and their behavior in other parts of the world.

For example, early settlers brought barberry bushes with them from Europe to beautify their new-world homes. In common with scientists of their time, the colonists did not know that some of the barberries and mahonias they brought with them were alternate hosts of the fungus causing black stem rust of wheat and other grains. Following the arrival of the barberry plants and rust-infested straw, this costly disease became established in this country. We now hold black stem rust in check by eradicating rust-susceptible barberries and mahonias from the Nation's important grain regions and prohibit further movement of such plants into those areas.

The famous gift of flowering cherry trees for Washington, D.C., 50 years ago, also involved a pest problem. Because of the numerous fungi, viruses, and other pests affecting cherry trees in the Orient, the gift trees were propagated under special conditions. But despite these precautions, the original cherry trees are believed to have brought in the oriental fruit moth which is still causing havoc in our orchards. These gift trees or subsequent shipments also brought in a virus that attacks Bing and Lambert cherries, making the fruit commercially unsalable. So now we restrict the importation of cherry and related species from countries where destructive fungi and viruses are known to attack them. This is necessary to protect America's orchards and parks, including Washington's cherry trees.

Plant Pests Take a Big Bite

Foreign and native plant pests together take a big bite out of our farm crops, gardens, forests, and ornamental shrubs and shade trees. In addition, growers spend millions every year on control measures to prevent even greater losses. Entomologists estimate that there are about 10,000 kinds of pests in this country having sufficient damage potential to be classed as enemies. However, only about 50 to 60 of these cause about 90 percent of the damage.

Plant Quarantines and How They Work

Plant quarantines are America's first line of defense against the entry and spread of destructive plant pests threatening our farms, forests, and gardens. These quarantines are of two general types—foreign and domestic.

Foreign plant quarantines restrict or prohibit the entry into the United States of plants, cuttings, bulbs, seed, soil, plant products, and other articles which might harbor destructive alien pests or diseases. U.S. inspectors examine cargo and baggage at our ports of entry to enforce the foreign plant quarantine regulations.

Domestic plant quarantines are designed to prevent the spread of pests within the United States. When a new pest or disease that threatens serious damage to plants in another area or State is found, a quarantine may be invoked. Before plants or other articles that might harbor the pests can be legally moved from a quarantined area, they must be inspected and found free of the pest or be effectively treated, under official supervision, to eliminate the pest hazard. Domestic quarantine regulations may be enforced by either State or Federal plant pest control inspectors. If the inspector finds plants to be pest free or if the plants are effectively treated, he may issue a certificate or permit authorizing movement of the plants from the quarantined area. Plants or other materials moving without authorization from a quarantined area may be seized.

Some destructive pests currently being held in check by domestic plant quarantines include black stem rust, European chafer, gypsy moth, imported fire ant, Japanese beetle, Mexican fruit fly, pink bollworm, soybean cyst nematode, white-fringed beetle, and witchweed.

Pestina Says:

HELP
STOP
the spread of
PLANT PESTS

What you can do

- Comply with plant quarantine regulations as an essential part of any beautification campaign. Before completing any plant exchange arrangements or accepting gift offers, make sure that plant quarantine requirements can and will be met.

- If a plant exchange or gift from a foreign country is involved, apply for assistance from the Plant Quarantine Division, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

- Before trading plants with groups in other sections of this country, consult your State or Federal plant pest control official or county agent about quarantines applying to areas or plants involved. It could be that even a nearby area in your State is quarantined because of some pest.

- To be on the safe side, purchase, accept, or exchange plants only from a nursery or other source that has been inspected by Federal or State departments of agriculture. Then you can be sure that necessary precautions have been taken to eliminate pests and meet plant quarantine regulations.

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